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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ

Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, August 7, focuses on King Abdullah's meetings with the Iraq and Turkish foreign ministers in Amman yesterday regarding developments on the Iraq and Palestinian scenes. Major commentaries today regard the developments on the Iraqi scene, arguing that, while Iraq is extending a hand for reconciliation, the United States is illogically calling for war.

Editorial Commentary

-- "America is isolating itself"

Center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (08/07) editorializes: "The United States continues its blatant threats of a military blow against Iraq, in a manner that seems to be out of swing from the growing international consensus against such an American action, that completely lacks international legitimacy. We realize that America's intentions of dealing an aggressive blow to Iraq are very serious indeed, but we also understand that the U.S. administration's lack of international consensus and Arab agreement for such a blow is going to disarm Washington of one of the most important weapons, namely the moral and legal basis for using unjustifiable force against a small and besieged country to oust its ruling regime."

-- "Iraq and reconciliation"

Daily columnist Bater Wardam writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (08/07): "The U.S. nervous reaction to and rejection of Iraq's invitation to the head of the inspectors to visit Baghdad proves yet again that Washington is not interested in the issue of the inspections or any other issues used as pretexts for striking Iraq. It only wants to change the ruling regime and deal the military blow in order to have control over Iraq's oil resources. The Iraqi invitation is very smart. It has uncovered the true nature of the U.S. stand and has provided Iraq's friends and allies with a new opportunity to maneuver and pull the rug from under the feet of the Americans. Iraq's moves deserve all the support they can get from the Arab world. What is also required are Iraqi steps towards the Iraqi people themselves in order to pull the rug from the feet of the Americanized Iraqi opposition."

-- "Iraq's desire to hold a dialogue"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (08/07): "Through a number of initiatives, including the most recent invitations to the chief inspector and the U.S. congress to visit Iraq, the Iraqis are confirming their desire to hold a dialogue and find a way out of the crisis between Iraq and the United States. But, when it comes to Baghdad, Washington is thinking in terms of force. This is the root of the problem that threatens the Middle East with another disaster."

GNEHM